

## **Country Report Portugal - EN**

Union of Workers in the Automotive and Related Sectors - STASA

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### **Report on the automotive sector in Portugal and our union at the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Automotive Workers Conference – November 20-24, 2025, in Pune, India**

As we are unable to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> IAC Conference, we have written this short text to give you some insight into the reality of the automotive sector in Portugal and the origins of our union.

#### **Origins of the union**

STASA – Sindicato dos Trabalhadores do Setor Automóvel e Afins (Union of Workers in the Automotive and Related Sectors) is a young union that has been active in the Portuguese automotive sector and related sectors, particularly waste collection, since 2018. We emerged from a struggle that pitted Volkswagen Autoeuropa workers in Palmela (near Lisbon) against compulsory weekend work in the context of investment in a new model. In this context, the government, political parties, and unions abandoned the workers. We were facing the Geringonça government, a PS government supported by the parliamentary left, the Left Bloc (BE) and the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). The unions led by parties linked to the government opted for the political stability of the government and the economic interests of the elites, against the interests of the workers.

Since then, despite the imposition of regular weekend work, workers have advanced in their understanding of the need to organize themselves using a tool of representation that guarantees independence from employers and the company and whose main strength is its combativeness. We created a union in the sector.

#### **The automotive sector in the country**

The automotive sector, although small compared to others, is fundamental to the country's economy. In recent years, and especially since 2019, it has produced more than 300,000 cars, accounting for about 6% of the national GDP, with 170,000 workers.

The sector focuses mainly on exports to Spain (in the components sector) and Germany (in the construction sector). The manufacturing groups present in the country are Volkswagen, Stellantis, Mitsubishi, and Toyota.

At the moment, due to the productive restructuring that is taking place in the sector, there are two processes advancing in parallel. On the one hand, there are investment processes in the construction sector, associated with new hybrid and electric models, and on the other, there is a threat to jobs, with some layoffs underway in the components sector.

Even in companies where there is investment, there is a significant increase in the exploitation of workers, as these new models are associated with great pressure to lower

costs. We are witnessing an increasing rise in the pace of work and its consequences on the physical and mental health of workers.

### **Government declares war on workers**

Defending the interests of companies, the government of Luís Montenegro, the current right-wing government in Portugal, has declared war on workers, with a proposal currently under discussion to amend labor law that facilitates dismissals, encourages subcontracting and outsourcing, attacks the protection of workers in parenthood, facilitates the expiration of collective bargaining agreements, and finally, last but not least, attacks the right to strike and the ability of unions to organize, especially in sectors where job insecurity is highest.

In response to this unprecedented attack, a general strike is being organized for December 11.

### **Greetings to the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Automotive Workers Conference**

We salute the workers and all the representative organizations gathered at the 3<sup>rd</sup> IAC of the International Coordinating Committee of Workers in the Automotive Sector. For us, it is extremely important that, in a sector marked by a process of profound change dictated by multinationals, tools for worker representation and struggle are built, based on grassroots democracy, mobilization as the main action, and independence from bosses and governments. It is important to move forward in building common initiatives and campaigns that defend the interests of workers against the greed of employers. As we are unable to attend this time, we wish to remain in contact and hope to be able to attend your next meeting.

The STASA Executive Committee

Barreiro - Portugal

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STASA

Automotive Workers' Union

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